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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000636

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DEPARTMENT FOR D, AF A/S FRAZER, AF SE NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG,
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/23/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [AU](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: SUDANESE ASK TO OPEN DIALOGUE

REF: KHARTOUM 511

Classified By: Charge Cameron Hume, for reasons 1.4 (a) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a meeting April 22, Sudanese officials asked to establish a bilateral dialogue with the U.S. on key issues surrounding Darfur. Embassy recommends that this opportunity be seized. The process for dialogue should be based on frequent meetings, held outside of Khartoum or Washington and focus on key issues. The window provided by the 6-month implementation of the heavy support package should be the timeframe. End summary.

¶2. (C) As a follow up on an earlier meeting with National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Director Salah Ghosh (reftel), Sayed El Khatib, Director of the Center for Strategic Studies, requested a meeting with CDA Hume April ¶22. El Khatib was presenting a coordinated government position. Also in the meeting were the Director for American Affairs, NISS, and Ambassador Al Tayib Ali Ahmed, Director of the African Union Unit, MFA. El Khatib said Sudan and the U.S. need to engage. The Sudanese would welcome a dialogue with the U.S. The U.S. can play a positive role now, much as was done in negotiating the CPA. He stated that his government is ready to enter into such an exchange with an open mind. He also recognized that a dialogue will impose obligations on the government.

¶3. (C) El Khatib outlined the few overarching requirements on the Sudanese side necessary to establish a renewed bilateral dialogue. These are: preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sudan; respecting the Constitution; and, accepting as a framework the earlier agreements on Darfur, specifically the November 16 Addis agreement, the November 30 Abuja agreement, the subsequent UN endorsement of those agreements, and Addis agreement on the second phase of the hybrid deployment. El Khatib stated that the DPA should form the basis for resolving the conflict, but there is a need to augment the DPA. He added that there is a need to solidify the different political groups and have a unified negotiating track. The Charge said that starting on the basis of prior agreements offered a reasonable way to open a dialogue.

¶4. (C) El Khatib suggested that there be an ongoing dialogue, with flexibility as to the venue. Meetings could be held on a regular basis, perhaps twice per month. Participation would need to be defined, but on the Sudanese side would presumably be based around the participants in this meeting.

¶5. (C) The Charge noted that an ongoing exchange, with open discussions, would allow both sides to clarify positions. This would allow for better implementation of the UN deployment. The Charge outlined three elements to be pursued

in parallel to move toward a solution in Darfur: political dialogue, humanitarian/reconstruction, and, security/stability. The Charge cited as an issue on which clarity was needed the question of payment of AU peacekeepers by the UN. Under the heavy support package, the UN will pay only for UN peacekeepers, not for AU forces. While some in the AU are looking for the UN to pay for AU forces, there is no precedent for this in UN operations and Russia and China would likely oppose it. Unity of command in a hybrid force must also be carefully addressed. Orders to the force commander must come from only one person. UN rules on command and control, as well as on administrative issues, would have to be followed. The AU and the UN need to adopt the same mandate for the hybrid force.

16. (C) Action request. Embassy recommends that this opportunity be taken to open a direct ongoing dialogue. One or two day meetings every two weeks in a European location would offer the advantages of isolating the participants from other activities, and putting focus on the Darfur issues. The six month window on the implementation of the heavy support package provides an overall timeframe for the dialogue. Embassy requests that the Department provide instructions that we engage El Khatib to set a date and place for a first meeting.

17. (C) Comment: Sayed El Khatib is currently Director of the Center for Strategic Studies, an NCP think tank. He was deeply involved in Navaisha and the negotiation of the CPA. He is an NCP representative on the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC). CDA Hume noted that because of his own impending departure, Washington would have to identify its own team. End comment.

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